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SUBJECT: MISSION BELGRADE'S ROLLING POLICY AGENDA

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11. (U) Summary: Mission Belgrade's interagency process - the "Rolling Policy Agenda" (RPA) - is the way we develop policy recommendations and implementation, the mechanism by which we oversee foreign assistance, and the vehicle by which we implement the Mission Performance Plan (MPP). Centered on seven interagency teams, each with a thematic focus closely linked to an MPP strategic goal, the RPA ensures broad-based participation and buy-in for decision-making, equitable division of responsibilities among agencies, and efficient dissemination of information. Active participation in the RPA by the Embassy Front Office injects discipline into the process and stimulates action. Nearing the two-year anniversary of its implementation, the RPA process has significantly improved inter-agency cooperation and stimulated "bottom-up" policy initiative in our Mission. End Summary.

ONE MISSION, ONE POLICY, ONE PLAN

12. (U) Two years ago, this Mission developed the RPA to instill better coordination among its dozen agencies in both republics of Serbia and Montenegro. The RPA process was envisaged as a way to brainstorm initiatives across agency lines, to review and oversee the mission's numerous assistance programs, and to ensure that the mission carries out the ambitious goals it sets through the yearly MPP process. Free thinking is demanded; debate encouraged; and disputes brought to the Ambassador for final decision.

13. (U) The core of the RPA process consists of seven interagency teams that represent our top Mission priorities. Each of these teams is closely linked to an MPP Strategic Goal. For example, the Democratization RPA team manages work that would fall under the MPP's "Democracy and Human Rights" Strategic Goal; the Management, Security and Infrastructure RPA team handles work relevant to the MPP's "Overseas and Domestic Facilities" Strategic Goal. One exception is that three RPA teams cover the MPP's "Regional Stability" Strategic Goal -- one team on regional cooperation between Serbia and Montenegro, one on addressing vulnerable regions within Serbia, and one charged with military and defense issues. Since all RPA teams have a public diplomacy component, they all include representation from the Public Diplomacy section.

HOW IT WORKS

14. (U) Each interagency team has a Coordinator, a Deputy Coordinator, and an Entry Level (EL) Officer who serves as a team "secretary." All three of these delegates represent different agencies or sections, ensuring broader

information flow and efficient division of responsibilities. For example, the Economic Development RPA team's coordinator is from the Economic section, the deputy is from USAID, and the secretary is from the Consular Section. Each secretary is assigned to a team that is outside his or her normal portfolio in order to provide our EL officers broader exposure to the work of the mission, experience in inter-agency policy-making, and regular interaction with the Ambassador. In addition to these standing RPA "officers," other American and local employees of the Mission with an interest or role in the subject matter handled by the RPA team participate in its work. Membership is flexible and adapted to the projects at hand. The agendas of the RPAs are indeed "rolling" in the sense that actions are routinely added and removed as old items are completed and new ones are addressed.

15. (U) RPA teams meet for one hour with the Ambassador and Deputy Chief once every seven weeks (on a weekly rotating basis) to review policy and make recommendations. While these meetings take place at the Embassy, members from the Consulate in Podgorica participate via DVC. The teams also meet on an ad-hoc basis between these sessions to brainstorm, prepare agendas for the coming weeks, review policy or assistance issues, and agree on recommendations for the Front Office.

BOTTOM-UP APPROACH

16. (U) One of the positive results of the RPA process is that it has created a dynamic bottom-up approach to policy formulation and implementation within the mission. The RPA process depends on the active participation and expertise of officers, specialists and locally employed staff (who are encouraged to participate actively.) It eliminates barriers between agencies, establishes buy-in from the working-level at the earliest stages, and provides the

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Front Office with well-formulated policy recommendations that have already been fully coordinated among our various agencies. The RPA process also injects discipline into the MPP process -- the MPP has become a living document, one that the RPA teams design, implement, and update throughout the year. By the time MPP season arrives, RPA teams have by and large determined the mission's goals and strategies through their agendas and policy decisions. The secretaries produce concise records of decisions made by

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the RPA teams, which are then placed in "shared folders" accessible to employees throughout the Mission.

RPA SUCCESSES

17. (U) The RPA has worked well at this post, and we can point to dozens of concrete success stories. Of great help has been the RPA teams' review and preparation of our annual assistance budgets and their oversight of all new significant assistance initiatives in both republics of SAM. We can cite other recent successes as well. The Rule of Law RPA team, which tackles issues within the MPP's "Law Enforcement and Judicial Systems" Strategic Goal, has had several recent successes. This RPA coordinated policy on a high-profile murder case of three American-citizen brothers. Drawing on members' expertise, particularly from the Consular section and the Department of Justice, the team synchronized its efforts to communicate with the American family and to move the investigation and legal case forward. The RPA team also created a special working group to coordinate the mission's anti-corruption efforts; the group brings together members from the Economic, Political and Consular sections, USAID, and the Department of Justice's Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance and Training (OPDAT). These are just some very recent examples of the RPA's interagency efforts at work.

